



New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect

STAFFING AND OVERSIGHT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Marygrace Billek, Chair
Mary Coogan, Vice-Chair

**February 9, 2021
10:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Conference Call**

In Attendance:

Marygrace Billek
Tosca Blandford-Bynoe
Lisa Chapland
Mary Coogan
Carmen Diaz-Petti
Amy Fischer
Mary Hallahan
Corinne LeBaron
Lori Morris
Linda Porcaro
Jeyanthi Rajaraman
Robyn Veasey
Angie Waters

Mercer County DHS
Office of the Attorney General
Kinship Resource Parent
Advocates for Children of NJ
NJ Department of Children and Families
Monmouth Vicinage, Administrative Office of the Courts
Foster and Adoptive Kinship Parent
Embrella
Lifeties
Office of Youth Services - Somerset County
Legal Services of New Jersey
Office of the Public Defender
CASA Atlantic/Cape May

Guests

Nancy Carre-Lee
Laura Jamet

NJ Department of Children and Families
NJ Department of Children and Families

Staff

Daniel Yale

NJ Department of Children and Families

"In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Trenton Times and the Newark Star Ledger and posted at the Department of State, 125 West State St., 1st Floor, Trenton, New Jersey."

**Please note the meeting is being recorded for the transcription of minutes. Please be sure to state your name prior to making comments, motions and seconding votes.*

Welcome and Introductions

A brief welcome was provided by Marygrace Billek and the meeting was called to order. The Committee discussed that because these meetings are not able to be held in person, contact information



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will be listed on the SORS website for members of the public to be able to request to attend the virtual meetings.

Review September 8, 2020 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes from the September 8, 2020 conference call was made by Corinne LeBaron. The motion was seconded by Amy Fischer. The September 8, 2020 meeting were approved without edit.

Member Check-in Regarding COVID-19

Presentation on Solution Based Casework (SBC)

Nancy Carre-Lee, Deputy Director, Division of Child Protection & Permanency

Laura Wurtzelman, Deputy Director, Division of Child Protection & Permanency

Traditional work with kids and families

- When a call is received at the child abuse hotline, it is screened to determine if child protection services are needed
- The calls that are screened into two paths: protective services investigation or child welfare – either are routed to a local office to meet with the family to gain a greater understanding of the concern. During the process, DCF:
 - Assesses the safety of the child(ren)
 - Determines what supports are needed
 - A permanency worker is appointed if the family needs ongoing services

NJ is currently under reformation. During the reform, DCF adopted a Case Practice Model (CPM) which became the guiding principles of how DCF works with children, youth, and families. The current model includes:

- Quality investigations and assessments
- Engaging and partnering with youth and families
- Work with family teams to identify individualized planning and relevant services
- Tracking and adjusting plans as necessary
- Helping families to safely sustain and transition out of DCF involvement



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DCF found that the Case Practice Model didn't necessarily allow for full customization of supports to the families. Interactions with families required deeper digging so that the families are seen and heard. The families are experts in their own lives, so they need to be recognized as a partner and expert. Solution-based casework is about helping families feel empowered so that DCPD is not focused on service-driven interventions to help the families with their identified needs.

DCF and DCPD are implementing to enhance case practice. It will be layered on the existing CPM to strengthen practice with children and families. The current CPM, in combination with SBC, will allow family teams to organize, prioritize and document the work of the department. This will lead to stronger family connections, strong family voice in decision making and strong and meaningful outcomes. SBC is evidence-based and family-centered. It helps caseworkers to be true partners with families as well as providers of the services. It helps caseworkers to get beyond the "how" of child abuse and neglect, to the "why". It helps build connection, consensus, as well as trust and allows caseworkers to customize supports and solutions to the individual families.

The following is a summary of outcomes from research on SBC as it relates to child welfare:

- 30% reduction in removals
- Over 100% increase in goal attainment
- 27% more contact with referral sources
- 60% increase in identified strengths
- Chronic CPS involvement is more likely to be successful
- Comorbidity clients achieved more goals
- 35% reduction in recidivism over 6 months
- Full implementation of SBC met all 23 CFSR review items.

How is SBC different? SBC assists by enhancing assessment and helps to focus assessments on difficult situations and everyday life. Part of the process involves consensus with the family right from the moment DCPD becomes involved with a family. SBC assists with case planning by targeting new and innovative ways of handling the situation that brought the family to DCPD at both the family level and the individual level. Outcomes are measured by the family's progress and skill development rather than compliance with services.

Milestones of SBC:



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- Milestone 1 – Building towards a consensus summary
 - Working collaboratively with the family to sort out daily routines
 - Identifying caretaker behaviors that are barriers to immediate and long-term safety of the children
 - Work with family to make sense off what the family is struggling with and how they got to a point that the child(ren) may be unsafe
 - Identify resources within the family and their support system
 - Create a partnership - build toward a common way of talking and thinking about the problems
 - Specific interview techniques to build consensus and yield information to assist in targeted planning for the family
 - Normalizing developmental challenges
 - Tracking the sequence and history
 - Searching for exceptions to the problem
 - Separating intent from the action
- Milestone 2 – Case Plan Outcomes
 - Services are not the primary goal – they are the means to learning the skills that create safety within the family
 - Focus on behavioral change
 - Form agreements around the outcomes – family and individual level
 - Family Level
 - Developmental stage of family
 - Everyday situations the family struggles with while caring for their child(ren)
 - How those situations happen when they work well and when they don't work well
 - Individual level
 - What personal issues do the parents have that make it difficult to care for the children?
 - Pattern of unwanted behavior?
 - What skills do they have to manage their personal behavioral challenges?



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- Milestone 3 – Specific Action Plans
 - Assist families to realize the outcomes amidst any challenges in their lives
 - Created through family team meetings
 - DCF helps to co-create written action plans
 - Establish written safety steps and tasks
 - Ensure safety tasks are related to the family and individual areas of concern
 - Focus in on the identified safety concern
 - Identify early warning signals
 - Prevent high risk situations or escape high risk situations when they cannot be avoided
- Milestone 4 – Documented Competence
 - Noticing successes and acknowledging and expanding on the progress on the safety and reducing risk
 - Celebrating progress and successes

In January, SBC champions were identified in each of the 46 local offices to be trained and/or coach existing staff. They are currently in the process of the “train the trainer” program, working with the model developer from January to June. Once the trained, the champions will lead the way in training and coaching existing staff. Training will also be provided to service providers, DAsG, legal partners, and Children’s System of Care staff. This will create an “all in” approach to allow the families to see the benefits of how this initiative will help them and show them that we are all in this together.

Member check-in regarding COVID-19

Amy Fisher explained that the courts are still closed, but with preapprovals from the Assignment Judge to Presiding Judge and according to policies that are in place in terms of in-person proceedings those need to be preapproved. However, they are not occurring consistently. They are still at 10% staff for the building which causes some difficulties.

Review 2021 SORS Workplan

Marygrace asked the Committee to review the workplan and discuss if it was necessary to edit and update the workplan. Mary Coogan asked whether the trainings offered by DCF have been transitioned to an online format. Carmen explained that a lot of effort has been made to convert new worker training to a virtual format. The Rutgers Partnership has been working on formatting foundational courses outside of new worker training to virtual as well, but it is taking time. DCF is moving forward with



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continuing to move trainings to online. Mary felt that the workplan item regarding training may need to be delayed due to many trainings being unavailable.

The workplan items were discussed as follows:

- Item #1 – Impact of COVID-19 – leave unchanged
- Item #2 – Updates on DCF strategic plan, Family First and DCF priorities – leave unchanged
- Item #3 – Review PIP and have update presentation – Summer 2021
- Item #4 – Office of Staff Health and Wellness presentation – Fall 2021
- Item #5 – Office of Resource Families update – Summer 2021
- Item #6 – Update from OTPD – Move to next year’s plan – update on race equity training
 - Discuss replacing workplan item at next meeting
 - Push for Kinship and increase in Care & Supervision cases effect on staff

Announcements

On February 23, 2021 at 3:00 p.m., Legal Services is doing a virtual webinar event titled, “Reimagining the Foster Parent System to Better Support Families”. The event will feature Jody Rogers, a birth parent mentor, Robyn Robbins, a foster parent mentor, a reunified foster youth, Dr. Esquilin, and Jeyanthi Rajaraman.

Meeting Adjourned – Next meeting March 9, 2021.